1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

which the crops are planted in the ashes among the stumps and charred logs (Plate 5, *b*). The field is usually ready to burn about three weeks after the start of the dry season and is allowed to burn for about a week. In the planting women assist the men. Two implements are used, the hoe (sambá) of iron, which is obtained in trade, and the digging stick, which is merely a long pole three to four inches in diameter and five to eight feet long with a sharpened end. The latter implement is held in both hands and driven repeatedly into the ground to make a hole in which to plant such things as plantain. The hoe is used for loosening the ground preparatory to planting cassava shoots, maize, and similar crops. Cassava of the "bitter" or "poisonous" variety (*Manihot utilissima*) is the staple vegetable product of the Caribs. It is propagated by inserting young sticks cut from mature cassava plants into the ground at an angle. Each stick must have several shoots or buds and must show milk when it is cut. Cassava growing in the field is known as mainyá; the root of the cassava is called kiédi; and baked cassava bread ready to eat is arépa. After planting, the young cassava is weeded for a few weeks, following which it requires no further care until the roots are ready to be dug, which usually is the case after about nine months. The weeding is done by women and children. Cassava is a perennial which will produce a second crop without further attention. The third crop is usually poor because of exhaustion of the soil.

The roots are pulled up or are dug with hoes by the women, who usually go to the field every two or three days to replenish their supplies. They are placed in walishas (a type of carrying basket) and brought back to the house, where they are first washed free of earth with water brought from the creek in a calabash or pot. Then they are peeled or scraped to remove the bark-like skin (Plate 6, *a*). This process is called ipityali (I scrape cassava). The white peeled roots are then washed again (Plate 7, *a*) and grated (Plate 6, *b*). The graters now used are made of tin perforated with a pattern of concentric circles of small holes punched with a nail (Plate 7, *b*). The obverse surface of the perforated tin is rough and is bent over a log into a convex shape much like a larger edition of the tin nutmeg grater which is used in American kitchens. The graters average about eighteen by eight inches, and when in use are fitted onto the convex surface of a

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

244 824 calabash are cultivated: a, apotonong kwa'yepwi, large, spherical in shape except for small "spout" near the stem, grows on ground vine; b, morutuku, long, like a water melon, grows on ground vine like a melon; c, pawsi, small and elongated, grows on bush; d, shi'-iyongkwa'imyako epu, small and globular, grows on bush. Types a and b are planted from seed. They are perennial. Types c and d are planted from shoots cut from a living bush. The vines bear 412 in seven months, the bush types in a year and a half. The pap 226 from the inside of the fruit is sometimes used as fish bait and is 262 sometimes cooked as a vegetable, but the principal use to which the fruits are put is in dried form as vessels for liquids. (See section on Utensils.) An interesting example of sympathetic 789 magic is the practise of tying to the calabash plants the shells of the large landsnail, which in shape and color often resemble a small calabash. This practise is held to insure a good yield from the plant.

248 The cotton (maru'epu) trees are also planted near the houses. They are planted from seed and reach a height of eight to ten feet. They are said to bear in four to five months. Only one variety is grown. The seeds are removed by hand from the cotton bolls and are not used for any other purpose.

222 262 137 A large number of foods are gathered from the forest in season. The following is only a partial list of the edible bush products.

Plums (mope)[1] — bear once a year, about January; round and greenish in color; eaten raw and boiled.

Waiti — fruit in a pod like beans, grows on tree; seeds surrounded by sweet velvety meat; three varieties: paidyowa, long pod; posindyo, small short pod, grows along river banks; anakara, broad stubby pod. The seeds are sucked, but the fruit has little food value.

Asipoko — a round reddish fruit with soft tart flesh.

Arawiya — plum-like fruit.

Sawari nuts (*Caryocar [Pekea] tuberculosa*) — the Brazil nut of commerce.

Mora seed (*Dimorphandra mora Bth.*) — in times of scarcity grated and baked into bread, sometimes mixed with cassava.

Greenheart seed (*Nectandra rodioei Hooker*) — same use as mora seed.

Ballimanni seeds (?sp.) usually eaten by accouri and labba, but used by man in time of want.

Cashew nuts (*Anacardium sp.*).

The fruit of the kokerite palm (*Maximiliana regia*).

Fruit of the ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*).

[1] *Spondias lutea.*

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

354 The fireplaces are important parts of every house, not from the structural point of view, but because they are the centers around which food is partaken and from which warmth radiates to protect the blanketless Caribs from the sudden chill of the jungle nights. No particular construction is necessary for the fireplace, although one spot is usually selected for the fire, on which the cooking is done. The pots are set directly upon the coals and are supported by the surrounding fire wood. The cassava pan, on the other hand, is supported on rough stones at a height of from four to eight inches above the coals. At night several supplementary fires may be kindled in various parts of the house to warm various hammocks. Figure 5 shows a diagrammatic representation of the nighttime arrangement of a medium sized house. An important [412] accessory of the fire is the fan, which incidently is seldom used for cooling the skin. In a settlement a fire practically never has to be started from scratch, because somewhere among the houses is usually one which has not been allowed to go out. To insure the continuance of the fire during absence of the occupants from the house, large logs are usually left radiating from the embers so that their ends retain living coals for a long time after the flame has [313] died down. Konta wood is considered good as a fire-holder. In starting a new fire from embers, fine splinters of dry wood are heaped in a conical pile over the embers and brought to a flame by blowing with the mouth or by fanning. The Indians are adept at securing dry or resinous kindling wood, even in a heavy rain. The wettest looking piece of wood in the jungle, if it is solid, can be trimmed down to its dry core, which can be shaved into kindling.

372 When confronted with the necessity of starting an entirely new 177 fire, the Carib usually relies, in these days, upon one of the following methods: matches, gunpowder and cartridge caps, or iron and flint. Safety matches may be bought at the trading posts at the standard price of ten cents for a one-cent box, and those natives who have any contact at all with the shops usually have at least one box of matches stored somewhere about the house, carefully protected from cold and damp. Naturally, these conveniences of white civilization are used only with the greatest parsimony. In emergencies, a man with ammunition can start a fire by exploding a cartridge cap into a small pinch of gun powder. Many of the men possess strike-a-light outfits consisting of a piece of flint and

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

the approach of reptiles. Parrots (kurewako) are frequent tenants of the houses; one of these birds at Sawari could speak several Carib phrases and realistically imitated the whining of a dog and the moans of a woman in sexual embrace, much to the amusement of the men. Corn birds (awashiwini), resembling in size and plumage the common American black bird, are taught to perch upon their owners' hands and necks, and are frequently to be found fluttering about the floors of the houses; at Sawari, one woman regularly on rainless days placed just outside her house a shallow dish full of water where the corn bird would come to bathe, fluttering and preening itself, and not at all abashed by the presence of people. Mention has already been made of the treatment accorded to hunting dogs. Care is also taken to provide for the comfort of the bitches when littering; one afternoon in Miller's house at Sawari, the whole family assisted for several hours at the accouchement of a bitch; a walisha lined with leaves was placed on a shallow depression in the floor; the children looked on and assisted the dog to be comfortable during the process of parturition. The Spanish cadouri is a small black and white bird (pipishi) about the size of a sparrow, greatly prized for its friendly ways. These birds are regularly fed on crumbs of cassava bread. Chickens (korotoko) are present at most of the settlements; they all appear to be a mongrel black and white fighting breed, and have probably been introduced from Venezuela in fairly recent times; neither the eggs nor the flesh of these fowls is eaten; nor do the Indians show any interest in cock-fighting; the chickens are kept simply as luxury pets, and much time is spent in admiring and boasting of the form, color, and feathering of the birds. Young bush hogs (abuya) are occasionally kept as pets and eaten when they attain maturity; in several cases I found them tied to the house posts with bush-rope, "because they bite people." Toucans (kwiaking) are favorite pets. The kibihi is a small furry animal, somewhat resembling a racoon, often found as a pet around Carib houses. Pet monkeys of several small species frequently inhabit the trees about the house, coming down to be fed by the human beings.

Brooms of brush are used for sweeping out the floors of the houses, although, regrettably, this function is performed too infrequently to suit the tastes of a European. Garbage and refuse are carried into the bush near the settlement, where they are

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

364 quickly cleared away by insects. As a matter of fact, decaying organic matter about a settlement is not as much of a problem as might be expected, since any such rubbage is quickly disposed of by the swarms of ants which appear from nowhere as if for this very purpose.

514 Each household has its own latrine in the bush near the house. A tree is cut down, on which one squats. Personal cleaning is done with a stick. Men urinate in a standing position, women squatting. The functions of elimination are performed in strict privacy except at sprees when people are drunk.

For a general picture of a Carib village and the relative economic status of its inhabitants as shown by possessions kept in their houses, the reader is referred to our discussion of the village of Sawari.

CONTAINERS FOR LIQUIDS

415 In this chapter we shall devote ourself to a brief survey of the several types of vessels used by the Caribs which are capable of holding liquids. Basketry is described elsewhere.

317 **Pottery.**[1] Clay for the making of pottery is obtained in a variety of locations. The best clay is found, however, in the beds of creeks, near their upper reaches, where the force of the water has not been sufficient to overlay the material with deposits of stone and rubble.

323 [462] The making of pottery is woman's work, and the women seek the supplies of clay when it is needed. No special time of year or month is necessarily reserved for this purpose, although the dry season is most auspicious because at that time it is more convenient to go into the bush in search of supplies, and also the drying of the clay and baking of the pots can be more dextrously handled. Furthermore, during high water the beds of clay are frequently submerged. The clay is dug moist and brought back to the house in walishas. It is usually deposited on the rack or loft and allowed to dry, a process which may require a couple of weeks.

[412] When it is dry the clay is pounded into a powder with a wooden club. Apparently, natural ingredients are relied upon for temper-

[1] tumai'ini, pottery making; arinyo, pottery clay.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

BASKETRY AND PLAITING

285 462 ALL basketry and plaiting is done by the men, and it is perhaps in this department of material culture that the most aesthetically pleasing products of Carib handiwork are produced.

314 824 Nibi, a slender bush-rope, and mokru, a reed-like plant which grows in the jungle, provide the principal materials for basketry and plaiting. Nibi (*Carludovica*) is a vine about as large in diameter 285 as a lead pencil. For use in plaiting it is first split in half; then the convex outer surface is split off from each piece, producing a flat, ribbon-like strip, which is at the same time pliable and tough. This strip is then scraped with a knife. The preparation of the mokru (*Ischnosiphon* sp.) is not unlike that described by Roth.[1]

285 ● 412 415 Articles made of basketry or plait-work are the following: fans, sifters for cassava meal (Plate 8, *a*), trays (Plate 22, *b*), cassava squeezers, (Plate 9, *a*) walishas or carrying baskets (Plate 22, *a*), wallets (Plate 9, *a*), pegalls or clothing containers, quakes or general utility openwork baskets. Fiber trusses are also sometimes attached to pots to facilitate their handling.

285 531 Fans are of the design and type of manufacture illustrated and described by Roth.[2] Sifters are usually of the type figured by Roth.[3] The simple diagonal design is produced by twilled weaving. Also a twilled design is produced giving the effect of a series of concentric squares with their corners pointing toward the middle of each side of the sifter. This type is known as the "turtle-back" design, the squares resembling the markings on the shell of the bush turtle. Other designs are produced by using artificially colored elements in the weaving, usually red and black. The entire surface of the sifter may be divided into four quarters by a cross of red or of black. Another design consists of a series of evenly spaced red dots over the entire surface, produced by the use of a red element. The weaving technique used in all cases is twill. The framework of the sifter is usually of yarriyarri. The basketry is attached to the frame as in Roth (Plate 21, *b*).[4]

415 285 531 Trays are used mainly as containers for raw cotton which is being spun. Occasionally cassava meal and other loose articles

[1] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 137.
[2] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 296.
[3] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 71, A.
[4] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 70, B.

252
412

Ia Gillin E-5 (1933-39) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

[End plate 7]

a, Washing the cassava root after it has been scraped.

b, Apparatus used for grating cassava. In the foreground, resting against one of the braces of the bark trough is the wooden base of the grater; behind it is the perforated tin grater which fits over the base.

824 direct plant-to-plant cycling characteristic of the rain forest
241 floral community, energy is diverted for human consumption. The diverse floral species are replaced with species selected to yield food sources. Fields are prepared and maintained in keeping with this use.

242 The soil is selected with regard to its role as a support for the
241 plants. A preferred site is a hillside. The gradient allows for drainage. Also, a mixture of sand and clay will deter the water retention which would rot root crops in predominantly clayey soil. The clay component of this mixed soil protects the seeds and young plants from the full impact of heat from direct sunlight. Only a small field, about one acre, is usually cut at one time. Field shapes tend to be circular. Tall trees are left on the periphery to allow partial shade on the seeds and young plants.

241 The cutting is done to allow burning just before the rainy
[221] seasons that occur from November to January and from May to July.
[132] Planting follows burning. Previously, fire and stone-edged imple-
241 ments alone were used. However, iron-edged tools are now common in
• 412 the Upper Barama area. Digging sticks for planting seeds remain in
[372] use.
*[779]

241 The different cultigens are intermingled, making use of micro-environmental conditions. For example, sugar cane plants may be located to take advantage of a few square feet along a creek bed. Pineapples may be placed in an ash line. Young tobacco plants may be located to be partially shaded by a stump until mature enough to tolerate the sun.

*177 439 Throughout the time period under consideration, commercial trade goods have been incorporated, mostly by way of substitution for their local equivalent. Axeheads, cutlasses, knives, iron griddle pans, cotton cloth, and shotguns reached the population in varying degrees at the time of Gillin's study (1934:332). These trade goods did not lose their popularity. They have been added to by other external resources and their quantity and availability have been increased. Eventually, a flow of external goods and services into the Upper Barama River area has resulted in an increased birth rate and an increasing population size, an improved standard of living, and changes in the social organization of the population.

*177 175 443 However, markets have been introduced and controlled by external agents. As has already been explained, the Upper Barama River Caribs do not have easy access to regional markets. They do not travel to transact regional exchanges. Rather, they have depended on the opportunities provided by non-Carib middlemen who reside in the Upper Barama River area and who have good access to the limited transportation and communication facilities. As characteristic of the conveyance of regional exchanges into remote areas, market opportunities have been highly personalized. This was characteristic of the early period of porknocking activities and the existence of the gold companies. Personalized market networks continue to be associated with government programs and services at Baramita Air Strip.

*177 195 437 439 Market Opportunities Provided by the Early Gold Seekers

The earliest regional exchanges reported for these Caribs involved

*177 657 322 439 sent to Georgetown. A few times when the Welfare Officer for Amerindian Handicraft and Artifacts had a definite buyer, she made a special request for the large functional bows and arrows. However, this opportunity affected only one man who made these especially well.

*177 657 439 285 412 At other times, a few pots, matapis, the cylindrical basket used to squeeze prussic acid out of manioc, and sifters, used to grate the cylinder of dried manioc pulp, and other basketry work were sent to Georgetown.

*177 657 226 439 Another episode involving regional markets concerns tropical fish. For a few weeks from the end of April and into May 1971, Aenus Catfish, both speckled and plain, were collected. These fish are about an inch and a half long and can be easily caught by hand or net in the stream beds during the dry seasons. In early April, letter correspondence developed between the Project Officer and the proprietor of an aquarium supply company in Georgetown. The Project Officer was offered $50 per thousand of these fish, and he appointed a man with the help of his adult son to initiate collecting catfish. The first Friday, 650 catfish were sent to Georgetown in open tins via Guyana Airways. The men were paid 3¢ per fish, and the rest of the income was used in the care and storing of these fish. The proprietor paid the air freight costs. More generally men were encouraged to collect catfish, and residents from the satellite settlements as well as the Air Strip were involved. Usually on Friday morning, men would bring their catch to the air strip well before the plane came. Each man would bring as few as twenty-five fish which brought 75¢. The Project Officer would supervise the counting of fish and the loading of filled tins onto